

Comparisons of Maine Communities

Pay-As-You-Throw vs. Non-Pay-As-You-Throw

Prepared for the Task Force Reviewing State Solid Waste Management Policy

What is ‘Pay As You Throw’ (PAYT): Residents pay for waste disposal and/or services, based upon the amount of solid waste they generate and dispose of. Programs vary but are based upon a fixed fee, such as \$1 or more per 30 gallon bag of trash delivered to a transfer station or placed roadside for collection.

Status of PAYT programs in Maine:

- 70 PAYT programs in Maine
- 140 communities (including some unorganized ones) are served by these 70 programs
- 306,946 residents live in a PAYT community (24.1% of population)
- Average size of a Maine PAYT community is 2,192 residents (Portland is the largest community with PAYT)
- Average size of a PAYT program is 4,385 residents

What impact does PAYT have on the amount of waste being generated and on the community’s recycling rate?

In looking at the ‘raw’ numbers, this is what is found:

| Program | PAYT vs. non-PAYT | | |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Recycling Rate | Municipal recycling per person | Municipal waste (bagged) per person |
| PAYT | 33.67% | 141.6 lbs. | 675.2 lbs. |
| Non-PAYT | 29.40% | 152.4 lbs. | 1081.8 lbs. |

The average PAYT community reports 37.6% less municipal bagged waste per person than the average non-PAYT community. At the same time the municipal recyclables per person is 7.1% less per person than non-PAYT communities.

Two questions arise from this data:

Q: How does PAYT influence waste generation?

A: PAYT communities report a total of 34% less waste and recyclable material than non-PAYT communities. We are unable to conclusively determine if this is a result of a true reduction in solid waste or if this is a result of waste being disposed of elsewhere.

Q. How does PAYT influence recycling?

A. A community's recycling rate is determined by dividing the tons of recyclables by the total of waste generated by that community. The total of waste includes the weight of recyclables.

PAYT communities report less recyclables per person, and less waste per person, than non-PAYT communities. However, because the PAYT communities report substantially less waste, as compared with non-PAYT program communities, the recycling rate is higher.